१२. विदेश से

FROM ABROAD

A Dialogue Between

His Holiness Goswani Prathmeshji and Shri Shyamdas.

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SATSANG WITH HIS HOLINESS GOSWAMI PRATHAMESHJI

His Holiness : Alertness should be completely natural, when it is forced, the tension of trying to stay perfectly alert actually ends up distrubing us. If we lack this natural state of meditation, our deep thoughts do not effect our being. Then, if we start thinking about something deep and do not remain connected it with the eternal scheme of things, it will likely just p;ut us to sleep. When all is seen as the divine play or lila, everything can be comprehended. Freedom is knowing that all occurs according to His wish and is a manifestation of the Supreme Power.

Shyamdas : It sounds like the way a child would look at the world.

His Holiness : A child may not experience things to that depth but sees things void of fault. It is also possible for man to remain free from always seeing fault. That innocence exists within but when it is lost, useless fault finidng takes its place. It is necessary to be critical to enable proper thought and action, but excessive speculation can only create problems. For instance when a person first hears about a serious disease, it is very upsetting. But, if that person just remains upset, how can the disease be effectively fought. For how long can you worry about something, eventually the situation has to be accepted. That mind which is enmeshed in anxiety can not experience the joy and clarity of the detached witness.

When small children fight amongst themselves, there are no lasting effects. When we make something have a profound effect on our lives which is not truly profound, it becomes problematic. If we are able to absorb what is truly profound, it is uplifting.

People get too caught up in "What will happen ?" and, "How will it happen?" This type of speculation and uncertainty breeds anxiety. A decision that comes from the depths of the soul does not change with the situation. The mind may wish to change, but if our power of decision wavers with its whims, the power of determination weakens. In that state, both one's blessings and curses are ineffective.

In practice, there can not be total restriction. If you are not allowed to fall how is it possible to learn to get up. When a child falls, you teach him to get up. You must accept the child's fall, in order for the infant to learn to walk. In a similar way, the falls of our societuy, family, and own lives teach us how to get up.

One type of intoxication is achieved by changing the environment. For

a short while it may create feelings, of bliss but that bliss which is constant is completely natural. That person who is only happy in pleasant situations and otherwise distressed is not "musti", that is eternally blissed. 'Musti' occurs where nothing can effect the quality of bliss.

Shyamdas : "Musti" is an Urdu word, what does it mean in Sanskrit.

His Holiness : "Sadanananda", a constant experience of bliss; even the pain of stubbing a toe becomes a blissful experience. In the state of "musti", even the tingle of pain is blissfull. Have you ever experienced something like that. For instance, an electrical shock can make us very alert or after stubbing a toe, there might be a moment of blissful sensation, but that stops after we see blood pouring from the wound. Pain is purely a mental state.

The quality of life depends on the outlook, it is all lila, Shri Krishna is completely "musti". He plays the flute and argues with no one. It is part of Brahman's expansiveness. If you are always insulting the world, you can not force bliss to appear Even science says that if you stop the flow blood in a particular area any pain there will stop. See if your feelings flow freely or forced. Too much pressure creates a bad reaction.

Shyamdas : What will happen if one tries to achieve bliss by just adjusting situations.

His Holiness : You will get a headache and you will never be able to put it into practice. It is lifeless, that type God is also useless. When Dharma is not connected to life, it dies. Someone asked me, "what have you done which is concrete ?" I replied, "Nothing, and my nothingness is concrete." False expectations create anxiety, I am "musti".

This only happens when the soul is in balance, something like riding a bike. If you lose it, you fall, the "musti" is gone and you just get bruised.

Shyamdas : You mean that you should be able to move about like you are on a bike and retain your balance.

His Holiness : Yes. Then the Supreme which is the abode of all contradictions can exist. We must cry and laugh, in both there are tears and emotion, but their compound is different. You can are tears and emotion, but their compound is different. You can taste the difference, one is sweet the other salty and purifying. If they are real, you can't control them, when you are "musti", it all just happens.

Shyamdas : You should give talks like this everyday. It will inspire many people.

His holiness : Why ? They are fine the way they are.

Shyamdas : You might open doors for them.

HH : When a big cave becomes open, people are afraid to enter it because it seems endless; so what is the difference if it is open. If they are afraid, they will not go. A normal life is completely open, but people are pained because they are afraid.

SD : In love is there fearlessness ?

HH : There is fear, yet it is fearless, like a child that pretends to be afraid, but is really fearless. If you look down into a deep hole, you might feel fear without even falling into it. You must beocőme accustomed to it, Dharma exists to understand life. If you attach it firmly to one place, water will start to flow. This is why the ancient seekers made sacrifices by rivers. Flowing water is considered superior to water that is standing still. Flowing waters are natural; the waters that we artificially make flow are not necessarily healthy. They have to be protected. For instance, if our pipes are not proper, rust will form and make the water harmful. But, some of that same rust if put properly into a herbal preparation, could make us healthy. See how things can be transformed.

Everything remains in its own cycle. The rhythm of Krishna's Rasa dance has its own beat and musical flow. Nothing exists without its own cycle. "Musti" is to know the movements of things, to have insight into the flow. Too much speculation clogs up the brain, it creates nervous break-downs, anxiety, and other problems.

If the flow of thoughts can create great negativity, just imagine what positive effect they can generate. It is a question of application. Don't insult our various means, learn to use them skillfully. A knife can cut your hand or can be useful in preparing vegetables. If you use your means improperly, you will suffer the results. Means do not deny proper or improper applications, they just are. The first Dharma to learn is proper action, then proper thought ensues and one can live with balance. If I don't understand somethings, I don't have to do an action to understand it, I can just think about it and comprehend it. There is mental karma and bodily karma. The actions of the body effect the mind, but even if you do not do an action with the body, the mind is able to experience it with the same intensity as if it was done with the body. Man's upliftment or downfall depends on balance. If the evergy flow is mostly outward, the mental flow wil be less. Too much force anywhere will tire us, wihile not enough force will not achieve anything. When the body removes those things that are excessive, peace ensues. when improper thought is removed, tranquility dawns. When only divine thoughts and feelings remain through all actions, the state of "musti" can be experienced.

If you want to stop someone from doing something, force is not the best way, there must be a subtle approach. Force can only be used toa limit,

beyond that, it tips everything over. For instance, if you want to stop someone from eating something, if you continually tell him to stop, he might get fed up with your demands. The change must come from one's own inner nature. There is a "kiran tantra" practice whereby a tantric practitioner can completely control someone, even from a distance. The person who falls under the control of that tantra, can not even see the person who is controlling them. Itr is hard to know from where the power is coming. that tantra works only when someone is weaker than the person who is doing the tantra. Such tantric practices are not looked upon with respect, it is all a type of magic. The person who falls under the sway of such a power, does not really change, but is merely influenced for the time being. It lacks real transformation, and therefore has no lasting effect. True spiritual impact has nothing to do with those types of influence, but with transformation.

SD : Is this transformation achieved through good association ?

HH : When a person is able to transform himself, that is a worthy change. If someone forces you with a gun, there is no positive reform.

SD : If you want to help someone transform, what can you do ?

HH : All you can do is open the door : If they want to come, good; if not, the door is closed. Many people come here without really desiring to. Those who are not truly interested leave. Experience must come in a natural fashion, only then can it be fruitful. Otherwise, it is a forceful means, and such means can not produce the fruit. Only when the fruit becomes the means can it work.

SD : What if the person has no seed.

HH : then, you should not try to influence such a person. Sometimes a medical compound may be made with a poison. when it is taken in proper dosage and blended with other things, it can be helpful because its poisonous effect undergoes a transformation.

Each person must find the right path. Yoga or whatever. the road is long, and goes for miles. If it becomes too wide, you can get lost. People who lose their way can get lost in the jungle while those who have a good sense of direction can travel even at night, and arrive at their distant destination.

SD : Why is it that people do not see the inner form of the Path of Grace.

HH : What is there to see from the outside ?

SD : A very small percentage seem to see.

HH : This is the case in all paths. Quality is very rare. But, it is hard to judge someone from outside. If you want to apraise a house, you must

go through its insides. Similarly, you can not judge a person's soul from its shell. People talk about divine worship, but where is it ? It is truly a buyer's market. If people can not see the proper meaning, they concoct another, just to fill the space.

SD : What attitude should we have towards that confusion ?

HH : There should be no attitude towards it at all, just carry on with devotion. If you have the attitude that, "I know the Path of Grace," then the door definitely closes. You will be left with nothing and what you did have will be squandered.

SD : Does this mean that bhaktas should live in the spirit of Vallabhacharya's teaching to live close enough to others to have good association while keeping enough distance to not be affected by negative qualities.

HH : If you are too close you will get burned, if too far away, you will be cold. Air conditioning is good, but we are not able to sleep on snow. There should be a balance. It can be achieved anywhere, even by simply sleeping, the inner self is very powerful.

SD : In the life stories of the followers of the Path of Grace it is revealed that essence of grace is hidden.

HH : Yes very hidden. It is always the case with things that are of a higher standard.And so it takes many readings to understand, and total comprehension could take years. Each account of the bhakta's life revealed in the 84 Vaishnavas is filled with many meanings. The life sketch opens slowly by itself. True understanding of the Path comes when one's nature is complete, it is the most desirable position.

SD : Do you mean that one's nature should be transformed by connecting each sense with Shri Krishna ?

HH : It can happen, and that constitutes fullness. It can start anywhere, and is without limit. Still, it is said that first comes the connection with the soul, then the mind, speech, senses and finally with the body. How the experience will occur can not be limited, but it should all come together. Not every person can understand this. In the process, there should be no prejudice. To make a good sweetener, much waste must be discarded.

Your best writing, poetry, and lecture will come after deep meditation. If you speak to impres someone, at that moment you will lose it. Touch essence. When Govinda Svami sang about the spring sport of Holi, he saw the Lord and then sang. When the Lord disappeared from his sight, his song came to an abrupt close for the Lord was no longer before him.

HIs poetry was not created from imagination, but from his true feelings. when poetry is created from seeing Him, it has effect. And so, even problems, as long as they are connected to Supreme Bliss they are not real problems. Supreme Bliss (ananda) is beyond the mundane pleasures and pains. Whatever is connected to Supreme Bliss transcends. When the whole is experienced, no dualism can remain. Connection to "ananda" removes all fears in a moment.

SD : In that condition, the soul does not desire pain or pleasure ?

HH : Don't say it like that, it sounds careless, remain in the bliss, stay intoxicated. Shri Vallabhacharya has given us worldly examples of feelings to understand the divine. If you do not know the feelings, then what you imagine the divine to be, will be off because it has no relative in the world. Don't just discard things in the pride of knowledge : it kills creative thought like Shankaracharya's monism. Shri Vallabhacharya's pure monism is sweet, it follows you, and you get stuck in the honey.

Hatred of the world occurs when one feels separate and accepts a gap in time, feelings and relationships. If reality is always new, and seen as lila, that sad space will never occur.

When a person feels that he is a great teacher, then he and his followers become part of a narrow sect. The true path exists where the teachings of Brahman are properly given. That Path is called in Sanskrit a "Sampradaya", an established lineage.

SD : The lineage of Vallabhacharya seems to have a different outlook towards the position of guru.

HH : The reason why is that no one claims to be the present guru in Vallabhacharya's tradition, and so no one is fighting for guruship. In the Path of Grace, the guru is Shri Vallabhacharya.

SD : Then, you do not consider youself a teacher or guru.

HH : You may consider me a gurur or a donkey, whatever you feel like believing. Whatever is good for your particular position, believe in. we lineage holders are simply followers of Shri Krishna, we are Vaishnava, and look after things to see that the structure of bhakti is not broken. Although Surdas had thousands of followers, after he met his guru Shri Vallabhacharya, he no longer had the desire to give anyone further initiation. He did not even remain as a guru to those he previously had made disciples. Cherishing this attitude allowed him the ability to truly praise and see the Lord's lila.

If you take a strict military man from his military post and put him in a totally different situation, he will still remain by nature a military man. In

a similar way, wherever you put the follower of the Lord, make him a guard, guru, whatever, he will always remain a 'dasa', a follower of the Lord. Even Shri Vallabhacharya has stated. "I am nothing but a follower of the Lord." So you see, a lineage holder can give initiation, but the original guru is the Lord.

SD : But it is said that the Gopis, the milk maids of Braja are the gurus.

HH : Vallabhacharya has stated that his guru is the Gopis, and then mentioned elsewhere that his guru is Lord Vyasa, the author of the Gita. Bhagavata and other scriptures.

The Lord is everyone's guru, but in terms of practice and the way to realize the Lord,the Gopis are the highest teachers. The Gopis did not achieve the Lord through any means. Even the Vedas do not even say that the Lord can be realized through any specific practice. If you are going to go the way of Veda Vyasa, the guru of knowledge, then it is according to the Vedant, but don't forget that Bhagavan Shri Krishna is the original guru. Vyasa is the guru of Brahmavada that teaches that everything is God and nothing but God. The Gopis are the teachers of the actions of bhakti and their related feelings.

We have a body, so there is need for some law and discrimination, like a car driver needs discrimination and perhaps some knowledge about the engine. In a similar light, the Vedas have revealed the law but that person who is not under the restriction of the Vedas if they worship the Blessed Lord, they command full respect.

There are three different types of souls.

1. Pravahi souls flow with the worldly currents.

2. Maryada souls follow law.

3. Pushti souls are controlled by the Lord's grace.

SD : Can a Brahmin be any one of those three types of souls.

HH : Oh yes. If a pigeon can be a grace-filled pushti soul, then why can't a Brahmin ? Look, it is mentioned in the Yamunastockam that parrots, peacocks, and swans served the Lord and received grace.

SD : Is it possible that a soul of grace, could not be a follower of the Path of Grace ?

HH : Yes, it is possible. What is the problem, will The Path of Grace be consumed by that truth ?

SD : Is it also possible that a soul who takes initiation into the Path of Grace is not a divine soul ?

HH : Yes. A soul like that will eventually wander into the worldly flow, like

impurities that drift into the river.

SD : Could it be that after a few lives, a soul could go from the wordly flow, to the law then finally to grace.

HH : Yes, let them come.

SD : How about the possibility that souls can fall from grace to law and then to worldly flow.

HH : Oh yes, if they are not true devotees, it can happen. But, if the soul has a "pusthi seed", the seed of grace, then in the end it will fall into the hands of grace. A lawful soul that comes into grace will ultimately find its home where its seed is, that is within the law. The Path of Grace does not claim any monopoly. It has a fair outlook.If you want to read Vedas, read, perform sacrifice, then do it, or if you do not want to do those things, that outlook is also acceptable.

SD : What happens to the soul of grace that is not in the Path of Grace. It seems that any other paths would not be suitable.

HH : What can we do ? If they remain in the spirit of grace they will arrive. How is one able to say in what soil a particular seed will grow. One thing is sure though, a seed will not grow from solid rock. But if there is some dirt in a crevice on the rock, then a seed has a chance of sprouting and if it does happen to grow there, then let it be. The divine soul will imbibe the ways of grace under any circumstance.

SD : Is it possible that a follower of Rama, or even Shiva could be a pure soul of grace?

HH : Yes, even a butcher could be a follower of pure grace.

SD : Isn't it true that in other paths there is not the space to worship the Lord in the true grace-filled spirit ? For instance, when the sages saw lord Rame during His incarnation, they requested Him to give them the spiritual pleasures that sita, Rama's consort enjoyed; but Lord Ram told them that was only possible during his appearance as Krishna. So there was not the opportunity for them to worship the Lord with all the different feelings they had.

HH : Ram's incarnation was not for all of those purposes, but He was not really obstructed by that for he was the Lord, and played according to the nature of His own lila. He was not supposed to sport with souls the way Shri Krishna did. But see, if a soul is under the control of grace, in the end it comes over in this direction.

SD : How about the Sufis, they seem to believe in these concepts of grace.

HH : Yes, to a certain extent, but they do not believe in the ultimate form of the Blessed Lord.

SD : So, can you say that a true follower of grace must believe in God's divine form ?

HH : They will believe in both the formless as well as the divine form.

SD : What happens to those who have faith only in the formless.

HH : If they claim to believe in grace, then who will shower that grace ? You can say that it is without qualities, but how can you limit Him to no form; it can't be done.

SD : Some people feel that the form of God leads them to the higher aspect of the formless.

HH : Well, that concept is outside of the realm of grace. Let them go their way, but but how can you stop the Supreme from appearing in the most divine form ? If a man can change his clothes, or even have a different body, then why do they think that the Lord becomes ruined or weak when He takes on a form ? They don't becomes ruined or weak when He takes on a form ? They don't believe in the reality of the world and can't see it as theLord's play. Let them have their fun with their own approach. If the Lord wants to give a soul, regardless of its nature, liberation, the bhaktas can see that He is all powerful. The Lord cannot be stopped or limited in any way with regard to whom and how the divine fruit is given. And so, the bhakta just wishes that the Lord play His lila with great enjoyment within the world. With that outlook, everything becomes balanced. When there is hatred, then we need discrimination to halt the sickness. When the disease stops and God is seen everywhere, then there is no need for even discrimination because everything is working perfectly. Only when it goes out of order is there need for discrimination, otherwise everything is converted into love.

SD : Why did Shri Krishna do away with all of those demons in Braja.

HH : They were not able to remain in the spirit of the lila. If they were, He would have let them remain. In lila, there is not hypocrisy, false attachment, hankering, nor ignorance, except a bit of divine ignorance to help the lila along. all of these negative elements are out of place there. A private in the army should not do the work of a general. If things are not kept in order, everything goes into chaos.

SD : What is the need for discrimination when it ultimately leads to a place where discrimination is not needed.

HH : With true discrimination, one arrives automatically. Before eating there is

hunger, but after eating the hunger stops. After you learn an instrument, when you play, everything comes to you automatically. And so, when there is addiction to Shri Krishna, it is all perfectly naturally, it is the ultimate experience. The nature of the being becomes perfected, constantly absorbed into Shri Krishna.

If one does not achieve a true spiritual level, he might falsely believe that he is able to drink poison like Mahadeva, but he will die. In devotion, perfection is realized in "bhava", divine love for the Lord. Today, because we lack bhava there is alot of false presentation, many pictures. But if there is no "bhava", what can you see in a picture ?

SD : When the false Vasudeva dressed up like Krishna and throught that he was Krishna, he still received liberation. So ,if a person worships the in a pseudo way , why can't the Lord reward him fruit ?

HH : If it is the Lord's wish then anything can be done ; but by merely wishing to be pseudo, the Lord is not obligated to grant any reward . How can you compel Him when in the world today we are not even able to compel one another .How can we expect to compel the Lord with false actions ? The best you can do is to make yourself attractive to the Lord and see the unity .

SD : When does " Mansi seva ", constant natural mental absorption into the Lord occur ? In the State of love, attachment or addiction to the Lord?

HH: It can appear any where and can not exist within any restriction .

SD: Then what is the difference between the yogi's "Samadhi " the perfect meditation absorption and the bhakta's " mansi seva"?

HH : There is a difference .The yogi takes samadhi for his own benefit while the bhakta enters the state of " mansi seva " for the Lord . The yogi forgets himself while the bhakta remembers himself .

When the primal Being has created everything, why waste time making distinctions? He is all three forms , the " adhideva" (Divine person) , "adhyakmika" (formless spiritual force) and "adhibhuta " (the mundane world) . A person who has not seen the Divine person will say He does not exist while those Who have , will confirm His reality .He is both ,the person's conceptof not existing as well as the other person's realization.But the pure formless is not the goal of the devotional practice .

SD : When Sanatan Gosvami insulted the formless abode, the goal of the impersonalist, by saying that it was not worthy of attainment. Shri Vallabhacharya corrected him that he should not insult that truth because it is one of the forms of the Lord. Chaitanya, Sanatan Goswami's guru, agreed with Shri Vallabhacharya and reprimanded his disciple.

HH : When we are able to give loving insults to the "sakara", the Supreme with form, then what is wrong with insulting the formless. (laughter)

SD : That is all on a divine inspirational level, but how about on a philosophical level ?

HH : On the level of Brahmavada, everything is God and nothing but God, what can be wrong with the formless. Why should there be a distinction of higher and lower. It can not exist in the state of love. Those people who believe only in the formless, sometimes insult people who worship the Divine Form and vice versa. It's that type of relationship, they fight and then love each other. Something like how husband and wife or brothers quarrel. What can you do ? Even after a disagreement, they still live together. The same is true here. In this respect, Shri Vallabhacharya is extremely broad minded, and difficult to fully comprehend for true Dharma exists in "bhava", not in the brain. He was able to accept every situation that occured within the world as God's sport, something many others had difficulty doing.

SD : Why wasn't there a teacher like him before ?

HH : Why should we worry about that ! When Bhagavan wishes, it all occurs; that is the only answer. Some years back there were no potatoes in India, then they decided to come. If you get caught up in how they came, then you will not be able to even taste the ones that are here. And besides, what explanation can you really gives. It will just end up spinning you all around. What is the use ?

SD : In order to reach Krishna, isn't it necessary to first go throught the formless spiritual realm ?

HH : The only order is Bhagavan's call. If a local worldly power is able to grant things, then imagine what He can do ! He is the Power of all powers, the regulator and the regulations, the practitioner and the practice. He is all forms, above and below. He can make us sit anywhere. If He wants to give a promotion, he simply does. For this reason, one should never be jealous. The Lord can say, "Even though you are a perfected yogi, when you come to Me, you will have to bow." You have to follow His rules like you have to follow the rules of the world.

Imagine that you are a big pundit, much more than let's say even your father. But, when you come to your father, you must give him respect, it is the code. There is no other way unless you want to change the entire arrangement, and then the whole structure could fall down. Why make it fall ?

SD : You would have to accept that the Path of Grace's outer form changes. After 300 years, it will change some more. For instance, today,

there is electricity in the temples.

HH : Yes, there is a difference between moon light and a bulb. That will remain. If you want to see the forest in the moonlight,would you place a lot of lamps there ? Of course not, it would ruin everything. We are now able to create disturbances. Light'ssoft sweetness is found more in a candle or ghee lamp than in a glaring bulb. People leave their homes to visit the jungle, their nature compels them to. During a movie production, in order to create the proper mood, they may spend millions, just so our minds will believe that she is really Cleopatra sitting there.

Within the world, there are atoms, and from them we have been able to produce atomic power. The bhakta creates things from common reality that will enable him or her to grasp the divine reality.

SD : In seva, what is the difference between the means and the fruit within the devotional sentiment.

HH : If you are going to Bombay from Calcutta, on the way there is Nagpur station. There you migth stop and drink some coconut milk, but you will not forget that you actual goal is reaching Bombay.

SD : What would happen if you see in the Nagpur station someone drinking coconut milk, should you tell him that he should not be drinking coconut milk, but should be remembering that he is going to Bombay ?

HH : Well, if he drinks too much coconut milk, he may forget whether he is there to drink coconut milk or just stopping on the way to Bombay.

SD : And if the train leaves ?

HH : He stays in Nagpur.

SD : And if antoher train comes ?

HH : If his goal is forgotten then he remains in Nagapur.

SD : If you see such a stray person in Nagpur station without a ticket, should you provide him with one ?

HH : If he wants to go, then give him a ticket,

SD : But is the soul able to give the ticket or is it only God ?

HH : Only when the Lord inspires both the giver and the receiver, can it occur. In the same way, people are inspired to manifest dharma.

SD : So, there should be no anxious feelings to reach Bombay ? Can't one enjoy the journey ?

HH : Yes, those who are in a hurry will not enjoy the journey. If I am flying in a plane, my goal is the plane's destination. The plane's goal is to fly in the air. Whatever is one's goal, so they achieve. What do you want to

do, drink coconut milk or reach Bombay ?

SD : Both.

HH : You must make up your mind, which one do you want ?

SD : In the Path of Grace, can't you have both ? If you have no nourishment, then how can there be grace ?

HH : The goal is grace. If eating stops you from reaching, then don't eat. If eating takes you there, then eat.

SD : So people may spend lifetimes at many stations before reaching.

HH : Yes. After one destination is reached, then another is seen. But, if there is proper faith and conviction, the proper destination is seen.

SD : According to Brahmavada, all the stations, Calcutta. Nagpur and Bombay are Brahman. And so there are no real distinctions between the fruit and the means ?

HH : A fruitful outlook, directed towards the true destination, overcomes all false distinctions.

THE ART OF DEVOTION

(A Talk With Holiness Goswamy Prathameshji)

His Holiness. The Lord is limited as well as omnipresent. He is atomic and also massive. When a person has total love for the Blessed Lord, He is experienced everywhere. Then His seemingly contradictory attributes do not create any conflict. For the bhakta, the nectar of devotion flows without pause.

Shyamdas : In the Blessed Path, is there any concept of sin consciousness ?

His Holiness : Sin consciousness and fear of God do not fit well within this category. If you want to put them in a part of the play, and feel that, "Now I am afraid of you," well, that is all right. In the pure state of devotion, there is no fear, only love. Shri Vallabhacharya explains the nature of lila when he says, "Lila is full of action, but devoid of worldly lust."

Shyamdas : What do we gain from studying sacred writings ?

His Holiness : Resolve. Resolve in one's undertakings, as well as resolve in works that are related to the Lord. It makes us strong so that some one's else's faulty logic can not shake us from devotion. Because of the Braja devotee's resolve, the rain god's wrath could not make them waver. The demon Ravana also could not obstruct the flow of devotion. Even death can not halt devotion. The bhakta feels that, "If it is Your wish, I will change my clothes and experience the death of the body. All according to Your wish." Such a bhatka is not afraid of either birth or death. He is "jivan mukta", that is liberated while living in the body. This enlightened attitude does not allow the bhakta's heart to contain any sort of guilty consciousness. Devotion transforms the base nature. An Urdu poet has said . . .

'I will not tell him my woes becuase if he heard about them. It would make him sad.'

If guilty consciousness does arises, it will appear within a devotional framework, nourished with insight and love for the Lord.

We should find the truth of devotion in our worship, in our actions, relationships, homes, friends, in the forest, as well as from the birds and animals, It should be sought out from the earth, mountains, rivers, and streams.

The devotee should tread the mind with Krishna. This is the gist of Shri Vallabhacharya's teachings, to know that this world is God and nothing but God. And so I will not tell him my woes Because if he heard about them. It would make him sad.

Shyamdas : Is Krishna seva something that can be performed today despite all of the impurities of this time ?

His Holiness : This age affects us, not Him. Today if a person makes seva, he need not be poor or a millionaire. The thing is that whatever he may have, it should be dedicate to the Lord. Then he will not have shallow feelings towards things like a materialist.

Shyamdas : Why is it that sometimes we don't experience bliss in worship.

His Holiness : That is because there is still a curtain before us. when the Lord took away the Gopi's clothes when they went to bathe in the Yamuna river, He showed them their true identity as well as His own form. When He removed the veil, they were able to recognize the supreme essence. As long as there was some covering between them and the Lord, they felt shame because they were still under the influence of their material bodies.

Today if we have a car, we are ashamed to handle a broom. We should perform all duties as the Lord's seva. I see that now there are some religious preachers overly concerned with moeny. If we can turn our homes towards the Blessed Lord's worship, it becomes a spiritual household like the homes of the great teachers of India. From such a home, a bhakta never desires to leave.

Like milk boiling over the rim of the pot, people can not stop the overflow of their gossip. But, if there is a place where people can make seva, that is independent and self sufficient, they could experience the wonder and bliss of seva and relish the various devotional moods. Such an environment would be free from conflict. People would work together for a common cause without any burden, like a team that plays together. If a goal is scoreed, it is not so much a question of the individual, but the team victory. In devotion, even if there is a defeat, there is no loss of prestige. That state is difficult to realize.

For instance, if I decided to fight with you, you should try not to get upset. Only then will it be known that your are firm. Shyamdas : Why would you want to fight wih me ?

His Holiness : I am just giving an example of how people's sense of "I" can get in the way of things. It happens when anger overcomes us. We should always try to remain in balance. Even after a husband and wife

have a fight, they still maintain their soulful relationship. Wherever there is an issue of I am big and you are small, problems arise.

Shyamdas : You have given the example that if you fought with me, I would have some bad or even negative feelinngs. But when Svaminiji is angry at the Lord, doesn't Shri Krishna feel her wrath ?

His Holiness : They do not experience any sort of shallow feelings. Their love has protected them from that. It is a totally divine subject. Here, if there is a fight, relationships can be ruined. If you want to tune a string on an instrument, you must see that the vibration is moving at the proper speed. Similarly, the mind should be in tune with the Lord so it does not become unconscious. It should always be remembered that we have built the computer, the computer has not created us. There fore, conclusions should only be drawn after taking the Lord's shelter and not at random. When the world is not seen as te Lord's lila, then feelings of enmity towards things arise.

Shyamdas : How is it possible to remove those feelings ?

His Holiness : Various ways have been revealed. These things can be grasped when we are in the proper environment. The natural meditation upon God is something that even science can not deal with in a conscious manner. And so, our advancements, television etc, are all materially oriented and can create complications. The complications that arise in lila are different, they are soft like butter. In divine love, if there is a conflict, it just helps us to realize yet another extract of love. In order to know this, one must be able to jump in the fire and not get burned. One should be able to enjoy the intensity. If one is to be constantly soaked in the bliss of sport, there must be strength. In the path of knowledge, the practitioner seeks to destroy himself so that nothing remains. They deny reality, yet they must live in it.

In devotion. People should get together, to have enlightened inquiry. the worship of the Blessed Lord is aimed at realizing everything as His form of bliss. Make karma the form of bliss, make knowledge the form of bliss, make painand pleasure both the forms of bliss. Transform confusion into that subblime experience. But be careful that the way of pratice does not become too ridged. The lady who did not have money for a spoon had to use a stick in its place. But those who have means to have spoons was forced to use sticks. You must always mould your mode of worship in accordance to your means.

SATSANG WITH GURU

(A Talk With His Holiness Goswami Prathameshji)

His Holiness : If you have to be in contact with an association that is not desirable, at that time go within and separate yourself from you body.

Shyamdas : Separate yourself from the body ?

His Holiness : Yes. Only have your body reside with that association while you remain in the intoxication that lies within. the "asura" or demonic soul cannot realize devotion, but the Lord can still liberate him. Know that everyone is worthy of respect because they are all part of Brahman's creation, but not everyone is worthy of being worshipped.

Shyamdas : A lack of true spiritual interest is what keeps people from dharma. It seems to me that only those who have true spiritual inquisitiveness can comprehend the nature of dharma.

His Holiness : It is difficult. That type of inquisitiveness is itself the fruit.

Shyamdas : You have told me that I should see all things as Brahman's various types of creation, as the Lord's lila., Because He has made all of the different souls in the world we should not view any one of them with contempt.

His Holiness : Devotees are worthy of respect, but worship should be of God. Now a days most people do not have much wisdom about God, guru, or devotee. What a person does not have in practice, he cannot experience in life. Even if a person practices something but does not experience its essence, and then merely talks about the experience, his words are a type of lie. If you hear such talk, it is better to tell the speaker that you are not interested in hearing things that have no spiritual validity. It is said in the Bhagavata that the person who has a very high opinion of himself is not worthy of respect .

When the soul is under the control of God, that is a state of law, but when the Lord falls under the sway of the devotee, that should be known to be a condition of grace. Bhakti is not something to do, it simply appears. And so, Shri Vallabhacharya did not have any sense of superiority. That is why he wrote at the end of one of his works that, "This is the opinion of the servant of Krishna, Shri Vallabh."

When you are truly able to understand something, it means that before any word is spoken its depth is found. Before a jewler sets a diamond or a ruby, he looks it over to see its quality and then sets it. That person

who speaks with an understanding of each word is the true pundit. Most lectures do not have that depth.

Shyamdas : Then I imagine that there are few people who are really able to discourse on spirituall subjects.

His Holiness : If when the Gopis cried in separation from Lord and the Sound of their wailing was ultimately extremely useful in realizing the Lord, then why can't someone who is articulating with words be helpful. But before you sing a raga you must know which notes to hit, it is impossible to sing the melody. If wisdom about the grace of God could be achieved through a book or lecture then everyone would realize Brahman. But we see many people who read and hear enlightening things every day and still they lack devotion and act in unenlightened ways. Your outlook should be reflected in the way you react to the world.

Whatever you read and hear is limited to your intelligence, but can God be comprehended through the mind ? In the Path of knowledge the ego, is gratified to feel complete, while in devotion it is offered to God. We can all easily gratify the ego but it is very difficult to offer one's life to His service. The enlightening things we read and understand in our lives should be reflected in our actions.

SATSANG AT THE KUMBHA MELA

His Holiness : When Brahman is beyond the intellect, why attempt to behold it through the mind ? When it is beyond material nature, how can you view it through material natutre. It must be viewed through one's higher super nature. Then it will clearly reveal itslef. If you want to have a good view of an area, climb a mountain. Then you can command an impressive outlook. If you are still unable to see what you hoped to behold, you can at least attempt to believe in it by following the way of our great sages. They have shown the way and have done so after they have experienced it. they did not reveal their experiences of truth in hopes of being recognized by society. They had no need for any publicity. They gave no importance to such things. Today it is a different story. People like publicity and create commotions here and there or make "halva" (an Indian sweetmeat) and hope the public will come and take some. If you do not want any of it, then don't eat it. What are you able to give someone if you impress them but only add to their confusion. All this sort of stuff really makes no sense. It happens because people have not contemplated deeply upon the issues of dharma. And so today we see that many of our teachers lack true faith. they teach others but are not sensitive to what they are teaching. They play their recordings loudly through their own speakers and feel nothing.

Shyamdas : Then how are they able to impress other people ?

His Holiness : The impression they generate is largely of fear. What is the point ? In order to protect the roots of dharma some changes will have to be made. Our spiritual roots must be guarded. If our roots remain intact, the superficial will not appear. Nowadays, the roots have been pulled and the superficial blossoms.

Shyamdas : What should we do to bring us back to the roots ?

His Holiness : People should be educted about "seva", service to God. Then their lives can be seva oriented. Those things that start with God are our roots. This is the essence of "Brahmavada", that everything is God and nothing but God. But you should be careful not to become a "sahajiya", that is a person who confuses the pleasures of the world for divine bliss. If a person wants to drink tea, there should be no objection. but don't claim that the pleasure that is achieved in drinking tea is the joy of God. That is the thing. Just accept the fact that you do not totally

comprehend the ways of God. If you do understand the field of God because of a subtle level of attainment, only then can you taste Brahman's elixir. for this you must have an equal outlook on things.

Shyamdas : Equal outlook ?

His Holiness : Your outlook can not be limited to whatever your mind happens to be thinking. If you want to understand the value of your lover's feelings, you must comprehend her outlook. Then you are able to grasp her true beauty. What may be beautiful for her may not seem so to another. It happens becuase they do not share a common outlook. Understand this point another way. If a person is addicted to some substance, he can not understand anyone else's objections to the addiction even though the end result of his addiction is negative. So you should avoid those things that have bad effects and simply accept the perfect conclusion.

A person's pride leads them to believe that, "What I think is right. I don't care much for that attitudes. Such a mind becomes crooked. Nowadays peopel think the teaching of dharma can not be done without money, but I ask you, what is the need of such teachings? What can remain without all of that is the real dharma. If your wife comes to you because you have a lot of property, she should not be considered a wife, she is simply whoring after your wealth. But if she comes to her husband for love, she is a true wife. Similarly, that person who comes to dharma for God, has truly arrived.

If you are going to construct a house of Brahmavada, you will have to have a fire station and whatever else is necessary. All these things can be constructed with an enlightened devotional lifestyle. Why try to conjure it with useless logic. See what confusion logic has brought to the world. Take hashish, marijuana, or bhang. People take one type of confusion in hope of removing a second type of confusion and then a third type of confusion is introduced to remove the second. Why should we try with our limited minds to figure out what God is trying to do. Whatever Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya has taught about God, through grace some of his teachings can become clear to us.

The Gopis of Braja never read or wrote anything about Brahmavada, but they gave birth to Brahmavada in a practical sense. they are respected as the gurus of the path while other sages who only used their logic to figure it all out do not command their lofty position. Some claimed that God had to be just so, but who does He have to fit into someone's mould? Shri Vallabhacharya says, "If you believe God is beyond all form, we have no problem with that position." You may claim, "I am God," but just remember that God can appear in you as well as in anyone else.